

For the Love of an Imperative Verb

Matthew 4:1-11

The First Sunday in Lent, Year A, RCL

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³The **tempter** came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, **command** [εἰπέ, **eipè**] these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴But he answered, “It is written,

‘One does not live by bread alone, but by the very word that comes from the mouth of God.’

⁵Then the **devil** took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, **throw** [βάλε, **bále**] yourself down, for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you,’
and, ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone’.”

⁷Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test’.”

⁸Again, the **devil** took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; ⁹and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰Jesus said to him, “**Away** [ὑπάγε, **hýpage**] with you, **Satan**! for it is written,

‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him’.”

¹¹Then the **devil** left him, and **suddenly** [ἰδοὺ, **idou**] angels came and waited on him. [NRSV89]

4:3

εἰπέ, **eipè**; *vb*: 2nd aor act **imperative** 2nd pers sg from λέγω:

translations: **command** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NKJV, NRSVue], also **speak** [NGEINT],
tell [NIV11, NJB], **di** [IAdNT]

4:6

βάλε, **bále**; *vb*: 2nd aor act **imperative** 2nd pers sg from βάλλω:

translations: **throw** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue], also
arróate [IAdNT]

4:10

ὑπάγε, **hýpage**; *vb*: pres act **imperative** 2nd pers sg from ὑπάγω:

translations: **away** [NRSV89, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue], **get away** [NAB], **go away**
[NGEINT], also **be gone** [ESV], **vete de aquí** [IAdNT]

4:11

ἰδοὺ, **idou**; vb: 2nd aor mid **imperative** 2nd pers sg from ὁράω:

translations: **suddenly** [NRSV89, NJB, NRSVue], also **behold** [ESV, NAB, NKJV, NGEINT], **he aquí** [IAdNT]; not translated in NIV11

devil, Satan, tempter

vss. 5, 8, and 11: **devil** [διάβολος, **diábolos**]

vs. 10: **Satan** [Σατανᾶ, **Satanâ**]

vs. 3: **tempter** [πειράζων, **peirázōn**]

Three different words are used to name the evil one. What should we infer from this? Three different functions or personalities embodied in one character? Three different literary sources?

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Gene Crossett, Jr.
December 13, 2022
January 4, 2023